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## My Day in DC: How Leaders like Linda Sarsour are Weaponizing the Media to Foment a Global Campaign Against Jews

Anti-Israel rallies like the one I attended, exploding around the world, aren't just filled with innocuous "pro-Palestine protestors," as media report.





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WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Saturday, standing on the flatbed of a yellow Penske truck snaking along Constitution Avenue NW, a young Arab American boy led a sea of Muslim activists in a death chant for the destruction of the state of Israel and the removal of the seven million Jews who live there, as controversial political activist Linda Sarsour led the march like a field marshall.

In his age-appropriate squeaky voice, he yelled: “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!”



On cue, waving Palestinian flags furiously in the air, the hundreds of adults around him bellowed: “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!”

Anti-Israel rallies like the one I attended, exploding around the world, aren’t just filled with innocuous “pro-Palestine protestors,” as media report. Walking 10,000 steps with these protestors, I saw that these anti-Israel marches are largely financed, organized and directed by Muslim leaders, like Sarsour, in the Woke Army, an unholy alliance of hard-left organizations and Islamist groups that believe in political Islam.

They rage in blood libel, spreading lies about Israeli Jews directing a “genocide” of Palestinians with no accountability on the Hamas terrorist organization for years of failed political leadership in Gaza and now the Oct. 7 barbaric assault on civilians in Israel. The cast of characters in the D.C. rally are a window into the same kind of roll call in cities across the world of groups with different names – like the extremist organization Hizbut Tahrir – but grounded in the same movement of political Islam born out of grievances and hate of Israel and Jews.

Around the world, these Islamist leaders are participating in dangerous information warfare, deploying stochastic terrorism, which weaponizes the media to foment ideologically motivated hate and violence. And none of it will help Muslims, Arabs or Palestinians.

As a former reporter for the Wall Street Journal, I have studied these organizations for 21 years since my

friend and colleague Daniel Pearl's murder by Pakistani extremists in 2002 for being a Jew and son of Israel. On Saturday, I immediately recognized the leaders of the Woke Army, dotting the one-and-a-half-mile route the marchers took from the Washington Monument to the U.S. Capitol over several hours, past Smithsonian museums and federal offices. How they responded to my questions about Hamas reveals how rigid they are in their tyranny of thought, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy for war and conflict.

First, who were they?

Islamist leaders in the Woke Army sto...



The Muslim brothers – and one sister, “Sister Linda” – leading the march are leaders of groups with an alphabet soup of aspirational names – American

Muslims for Palestine, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Dream Defenders, Emgage, MPower Change, Muslim Students Association, Students for Justice in Palestine and United States Council of Muslim Organizations. They are today carrying out the legacy of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 upon the ashes of the dismantled Ottoman Empire with a mission to promote a puritanical interpretation of political Islam and reestablish Islamic states.

They are six decades in the making in the United States since the early 1960s when my parents and their generation of Muslims immigrated to the U.S., mostly as students. My parents, born in India, didn't practice a fundamentalist belief in Islamism, and my parents raised me with a belief in the separation of mosque and state and a sense of humanity for all people. Many of these groups have hubs in northern Virginia, where I now call home.

They aren't kitchen table organizations. This is the total annual revenue of the Muslim organizations that supported the anti-Israel protest in DC: at least \$34 million in 2021, the latest IRS data available.

Along those 10,000 steps that I walked with them, not a single one of these Muslim "brothers" and one "sister" once condemned the Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians or expressed any sorrow to the victims. What they did though was threaten President Joe Biden's political future for daring to stand with Jews and the state of Israel.

"Biden, Biden, you're a liar!"

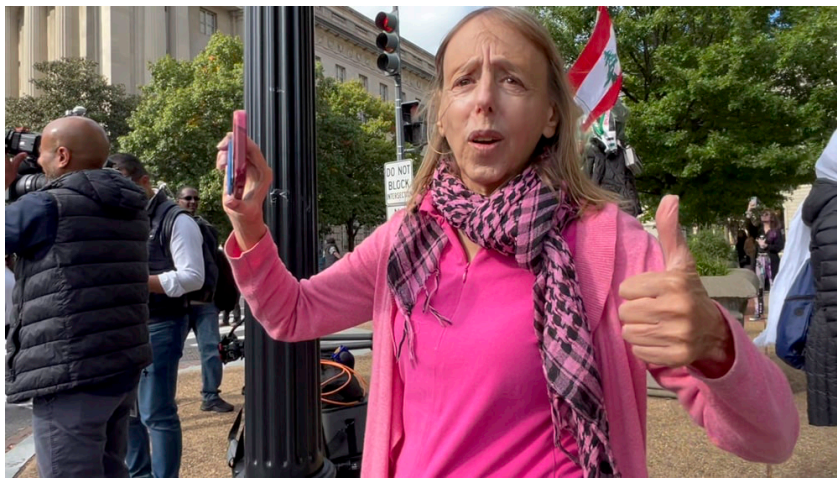
Atop the flatbed, near the boy, stood Osama Abuirshaid, executive director of American Muslims for Palestine, like the star quarterback in a homecoming parade, only he sported a keffiyeh, the black-and-white scarf that is a symbol of Palestinian "resistance." Beside him, Taher Herzallah, director of outreach

and grassroots organizing at American Muslims for Palestine, issued orders to staff. Just three days earlier, he had accosted Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene in the U.S. Capitol, hurling invectives at her, including, “Murderers go home!”

Now, the rally’s chief chanter, Mohamad Habehh, director of development at American Muslims for Palestine, led the crowd in hyperbolics about Israel: “How many kids are killed today? Israel is a racist state! Israel is an apartheid state. Israel is a terrorist state!”

At the intersection of Constitution Avenue NW and 12th Street NW, where the IRS building stands, I spotted a woman who stuck out like a sore thumb, dressed in Barbie pink over her jeans. She was Medea Benjamin, founder of Code Pink, a “peace group” that has traveled to Iran and Gaza, treated like VIPs by the Islamist regimes in power. She gave a thumbs up that she was supporting the march.





“Do you believe in the existence of the state of Israel? I asked. She wouldn’t answer, saying, “I’m livestreaming,” and then proceeded to join the chant, “Free, free Palestine!”

There, at the intersection, was the manifestation of the “red-green alliance” in the Woke Army, the red the hard-left, the green the Islamists. Down the block, an anti-Israel Jewish woman joined the march, wearing her black shirt, emblazoned with the message, “Jews Say Cease Fire Now,” from a protest that blocked the halls of the U.S. Capitol, organized in part by “Jewish Voice for Peace” and “If Not Now,” useful fools in the Islamists’ strategy to destroy Israel.



Down a few blocks, Herzallah, who harassed Greene in Congress, stepped off the truck to pace the marchers behind a long banner with “American Muslims for Palestine” across the front. He huddled with a woman, carrying a loudspeaker. She was none other than Sarsour, the controversial co-chair of the 2017 Women’s March, which rallied a “resistance” to newly inaugurated President Donald Trump. More recently, she has been publicly quiet, and so her appearance as a field marshal for the protest is significant. Back then, she blocked Israeli feminists from participating because she considered them “colonizers” and “white supremacists.”

Now, I asked her, “Linda, do you condemn the violence against the Israeli citizens?” She scampered over briskly to a volunteer in a yellow vest, gesturing toward me.



The security detail wore initials on the front of their vest: “DSA.” The back of the vest explained the acronym: “Democratic Socialists of America.”

With instructions from Sarsour, “DSA” volunteers started stepping in front of me to block my camera as I recorded the anti-Israel protest. “We were instructed to obstruct your path,” one of the men told me, his earrings glittering in the sun. “That’s generally the tactic,” he said, with a smile.

It was the hard-left acting as security detail for the Islamists.



In the crowd, members of Young Muslims, preaching a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, started shouting my name to heckle me. I walked over to them and asked them if they wanted to talk. They turned away. One directed me to Edward Ahmed Mitchell, national deputy director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, now huddled on the side with Sarsour. I asked if he had a comment on the attack by Hamas on civilians.



His response: “Asra, if you want to put the camera down, I’d be happy to speak to you.”

Again, the camera.

Hamas terrorists used their camera as a weapon to film their murderous ambush, like terrorist porn. As truth-tellers, we must never relinquish the power of the camera.

Some years ago, Masih Alinejad, an Iranian American activist for women’s rights and human rights in Iran, launched a social media campaign, #MyCameraIsMyWeapon, and she curated images and videos of women in Iran daring to defy Islamic sharia rules

demanding they cover their hair. The images of the women and girls with the wind in their hair have almost toppled the autocratic regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran that Code Pink, Hamas and many of the leaders there on the streets of D.C. support. The camera is such a threat to authoritarians, like the kind at the march, that the government of Iran just sentenced two journalists who published photos of the young woman, Masah Amini, killed after being harassed by the morality police for her hijab.

As the marchers moved onto Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Sarsour got instructions from a local police officer about where they should next go and jogged back to direct the marchers, hands in the air, like an air traffic controller, to turn right onto 3rd Street NW, so the flatbed truck could park directly behind the U.S. Capitol.

As I asked Herzallah if he condemned Hamas' terrorism, he smiled strangely and feigned grabbing at my phone and

camera.



On 3rd Street NW, another notorious leader in the Islamist movement in America – Hatem Bazian, known as, “Hate‘ em Bazian” by adversaries for his vitriol against Israel as founder of Students for Justice in Palestine and American Muslims for Palestine – joyfully recorded the anti-Israel protest on his camera.

I asked him: “Do you condemn Hamas?”  
He responded: “I condemn hummus.”

I asked again. He looked me in the eye and responded glibly, “I like falafel.”  
Does he condemn the attack on Israeli

civilians? “I like the 49ers,” the San Francisco football team.



He then turned his camera on me, and I spoke to his audience to condemn Hamas and its attack on civilians. He said I was “funded by Islamophobia organizations,” the catch-all smear by these intellectual and religious cowards in refusing to acknowledge and defeat Islamist extremism.

Like anti-Israel protests around the world from London to Australia, the D.C. protest was orchestrated by Muslim leaders in an anti-Israel, anti-Jew political wing of the Woke Army, an unholy alliance between hard-left groups and Islamist organizations with a mission to destroy the state of Israel,



remove the Jews who live there, force a “right of return” by Palestinians and impose a system of political Islam in governance.

In front of the U.S. Capitol, on the yellow flatbed Penske truck, Sarsour threatened Biden politically for supporting Israel. “He forgot that I’m a voter and you’re a voter...I’m not going to forget.” She said “our voters” in swing states, “we will not forget.” She added “neo-liberal Democrats” to “our opposition.” She demanded that Arab Americans and Muslim Americans quit if they work for the Biden administration, “complicit in the genocide of our people.”

“Linda Sarsour is not with you!” she yelled, speaking about herself in the third person.

One of leaders rallied the gathered to call their congressional representatives to support an “immediate deescalation and ceasefire” in Israel and “occupied

Palestine,” blatantly biased language against Israel. What’s more, the bill is called “House Resolution 786.” I knew the significance right away. So did everyone in the crowd. In Arabic numerology “786” is shorthand for “Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Raheem,” or “In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Compassionate.” Muslims use it in passwords and atop exams to invoke divine blessing. My physical education student teacher asked me politely in seventh grade why I put it atop my PE exams. It’s a divine good luck charm. It’s also weaponized by the bad guys for their divine mandate for evil. The terrorists who kidnapped my friend and Wall Street Journal colleague, Daniel Pearl, used “786” in their passcode for their ransom notes. Now it was atop a resolution in the U.S. Congress that essentially gives cover to Hamas.

I wonder how many of the bill’s cosponsors and their staff know the Muslim touchstone with the bill’s number.

On Saturday, the battle cry, “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free,” was repeated in city centers around the world as the real goal. In D.C., Bazian lamented, “I am a refugee...I want to go back to my lemon trees,” in the city of Nablus on the West Bank. Years ago, I actually went to Nablus to track Bazian’s footsteps to understand his wound. Palestinians live there in a bustling town. He could go back any time. In a symbol of my support for the people of Israel and opposition to Hamas, I wore an Israeli Defense Forces hoodie at the protest that I had purchased on that trip at a Palestinian second-hand store outside Bethlehem.



In London, the Guardian reported “marchers” chanted the “controversial slogan” from the river to the sea on a route from Hyde Park to the government district, Whitehall. Peppering its coverage with photos of attractive young women and a good-looking family, the Guardian only mentioned lightly that march organizers had “drawn close scrutiny” for “links to Hamas” and “support for the terrorist organization.”

The AP was similarly cagey about organizations behind the marches, citing generic references: “thousands” of marchers in Dublin, Ireland; a “pro-Palestinian gathering” in Paris and “pro-Palestinian demonstrators” in the French cities of Marseille, Rennes, Montpellier, Dijon and Lyon; “demonstrators” in Düsseldorf, Germany; “several hundred people” in Rome; “tens of thousands of demonstrators waving Palestinian flags” in Barcelona; and “thousands” in Australia.

These were not spontaneous grassroots outpourings. The D.C. rally and events across the world were organized by an Islamist AstroTurf political movement, led by organizations with global networks and multimillion dollar budgets.

All a journalist would have to do is study the signs to see the muscle behind these campaigns: “Freedom for Palestine,” with “Socialist Worker” across the top of the sign; “Stop the massacre,” with [stopwar.org.uk](http://stopwar.org.uk) across the bottom. “Free Palestine” had “[www.palestinecampaign.com](http://www.palestinecampaign.com)” printed across the bottom of one poster. Around since 2009, Palestine Campaign’s handle on X, the social media platform, is [@PSCupdates](https://twitter.com/PSCupdates), and it organized its campaign with the [#FreePalestine](https://twitter.com/hashtag/FreePalestine) hashtag, as well as [#Nakba75](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Nakba75), in a reference to the Arabic word for “humiliation.” It posted a message, featuring former Labour Party chief Jeremy Corbyn as “one of our staunchest supporters.”

In the crowd in D.C., one man held a sign about the “ummah” being one. That’s the Muslim community. For Islamists, they use the concept of one “ummah” as a bludgeon to silence critics of their extremism, like Muslim reformers and ex-Muslims. It’s an illusion, created with the help of videographers and photographers they hire to create a myth of marching millions.



What must Jews, Israelis, Muslim reformers, ex-Muslims, Arab rationalists and others do to counter this hateful propaganda and AstroTurfing? They must claim the streets of our cities and the halls of political power with a spirit of moral courage, intellectual clarity and post-traumatic growth, as Noa Tishby,

an Israeli actress and former special envoy for combating antisemitism and delegitimization of Israel, did in her address to the Friends of the Israel Defense Forces.

“If you hide behind words like ‘militants,’ ‘it’s complicated,’ ‘well but the occupation,’ ‘resistance’ or ‘decolonization,’ if you can’t unequivocally condemn rape, beheading, or torture of innocent and the kidnapping of grandmothers, some Holocaust survivors, some from their sick beds, then you are witless pawns in a propaganda machine you don’t even know you’re being played by,” she said.

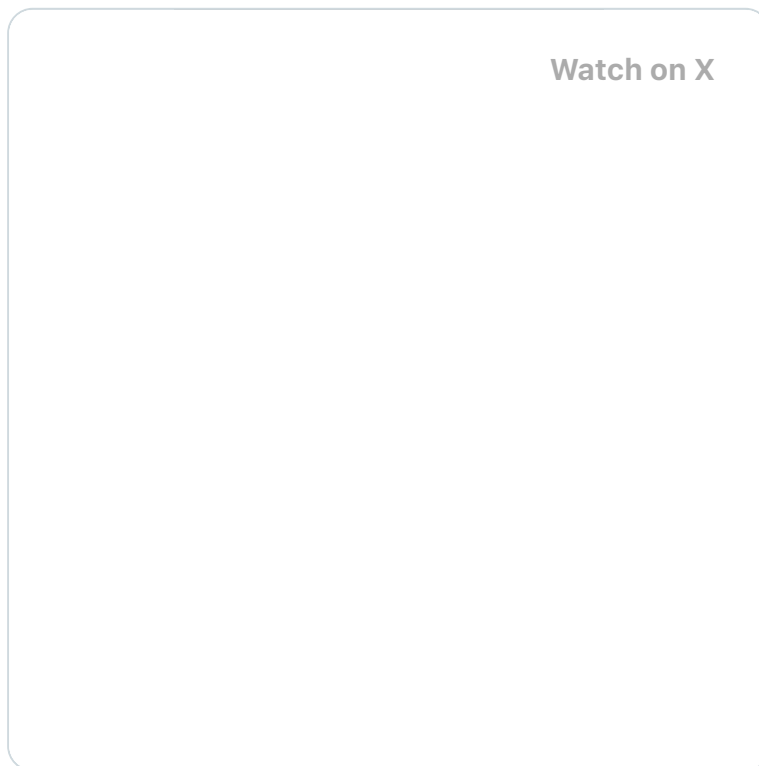
(((noa tishby))) 

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This is the most challenging speech I've ever delivered, but it's time the world wakes up to what the Jewish community has been saying all along.

What we experienced on and since October 7 was sadly, predictable. We've warned of the danger of radical Islam or, more accurately,... [Show more](#)



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That propaganda machine is playing out on the streets of our nation's cities by Islamists in the Woke Army, like the ones who claimed Constitution Avenue NW on Saturday. We must inoculate ourselves, refuse their propaganda and fill the streets and halls of power with our voices of truth, moderation and humanity.

*Asra Q. Nomani is a former reporter for the Wall Street Journal and the author of Woke Army: The Red-Green Alliance That Is Destroying America's Freedom. She is cofounder of the Muslim Reform Movement and the Pearl Project, which is dedicated to exposing anti-Semitism and remembering the legacy of journalist Daniel Pearl. To support the Pearl Project's investigative reporting, please contribute here. She can be reached at [asra@asranomani.com](mailto:asra@asranomani.com) and [@AsraNomani](https://www.instagram.com/AsraNomani).*

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